Lost by booksandtea15

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Summary:

Eleven is lost. And she doesn't know how to get unlost.

Lost

An anger like Eleven had never felt before, (even in the worst of times with the Bad People, and the man who called himself Papa), roared through her when she saw her *friends* (hers they were hers and no one was going to hurt them they were HERS) frightened and fumbling in the face of the Demogorgon.

The bone-deep fatigue that had made her feel as weak as the first time she tried to use her powers seemed to vanish, and as Lucas shot their last rock, she *pushed* with all her might, and the monster slammed into the wall. She walked forward. She could feel the blood trickling from her ear and her nose, but it didn't register. It didn't hurt. It didn't make her weak. Nothing could make her weak now. There was anger pumping through her veins, and it was stronger than any weakness she had ever felt.

She pushed Mike aside when he tried to stop her. He had to *understand*. She had to do this.

She stood in front of the monster, glaring at it, willing it to *die.* She could sense it. She could sense that, to kill it, to make it go away and leave her friends alone, she would have to go with it.

Eleven turned around, allowing a little bit of the frightened girl that was clutching at her legs and begging her to run, to leave the monster, to show as she looked at Mike and said, "Goodbye."

She knew he was crying, but she didn't have the capacity to think about that right then. She *couldn't.*

So she didn't.

Instead, she looked at the monster, the one who had taken Will, the one who had killed Mike's sister friend, the monster *she* had released, and she *squeezed,* throwing out her hand. She squeezed longer and harder than she had ever done before. Harder even than she had squeezed out in the hall with guns pointed at their faces

She could feel the wind whipping around her face, could see the

pieces of skin whizzing around her head. But, but it wasn't enough. Even her anger wasn't enough to keep this going. She could feel herself weakening, could feel herself slowing. She wasn't going to make it.

No.

She screamed, pouring all her rage into it, all the fear she had ever felt, locked in her little white room, in the small closet, crouched in the corner, all the nights she had spent wondering *what was wrong with me*, *why won't Papa love me?* and all the hate. So much hate. Hate for what had been done to her, now that she understood that she had lived anything *but* a normal childhood. Hate for what she was, for what she had become, for what she let into this world. Hate for the Demogorgon that had started everything.

She poured it all in.

And. They. Exploded.

For a while there was nothing but confusion. Nothing but roiling around, feeling like she was a million different pieces, sown together and then pulled apart again as her cells rebelled against the invasion of Him. He was trying to reform too, trying to get back too. To Mike, Dustin, Lucas, Will, Joyce, Nancy, Jonathan. Even Hopper. She couldn't let that happen.

So they fought, fighting for their right to exist. And, for a while, that was all there was.

She knew exactly where she was when she woke up. It didn't make it better, knowing. In fact, it made it even worse. It was dark, as it always was in the Upside Down. It was cold and it was completely silent. She didn't know how, but she was back in the laboratory, draped in a dark, absurd parody of her bed.

She was still wearing Nancy's dress, though after being pulled to its bare molecules it looked a little worse for wear. Ragged. Just like she was.

Her skin felt stretched taught over her face, hot and dry, as if it had been melted and poured onto her bones, and it still hadn't quite settled. She clenched and unclenched her hands.

She went looking for the gate. She had to. If there was a chance she could get out, could get out of the Upside-Down and back to Mike, she had to find it. She had to go to the Snow Ball. She had made him a promise, after all. And friends don't break promises.

She left her room with her hand clutched tight around a teddy, Will's she thought, that had somehow appeared at her bedside. She was frightened. She was so frightened she could barely place one foot in front of the other, not knowing what she would find on the other side of the gate, if the Bad People would be waiting for her, if she would be able to escape if they were, or if the gate was even still there.

She didn't know, but she had to hope. Something that she had learned to do this past week.

She made it down to where the gate was supposed to be, one step at a time. She couldn't force herself to look up until she was standing right in front of where it was supposed to be, but even so, she knew. She had known the moment she entered the room.

She looked up and stared into a decaying wall, rife with vines and gooey stuff, but with no hint of a gate.

She was in the Upside Down. She was alone. And there was no gate.

She was trapped.

Mike was so *angry*.

Not all the time, of course. Sometimes it was better, like when he and Dustin and Lucas and Will played D&D. But burying his head in fantasy and ignoring what was going on in the real world had always been a speciality of his. When he played D&D, the real world didn't exist. The real world was the fantasy, and the campaign was everything.

When the campaign ended though, it wasn't long before everything

sank in, before he became snappish and irritable, causing his parents to stare at him in bewilderment, not sure if they were allowed to be harsh and punish him, even after a month had passed. That was another thing he was angry about. Everyone treating him so carefully, being extra nice to him and making sure to ask him if everything was okay at least once a day.

He hated it.

The only one who seemed to understand was Nancy, who looked at him with a terrible kind of understanding, one born of knowing what it felt like to know somebody who had died (or was presumed dead). But Nancy didn't have much time for him. Mike didn't really know what was going on with her, since she and Steve still seemed to be going out, but she was still friends with Jonathan as well (and it was clear, even for him, that the guy was in love with her), and Will said she had kissed his brother a few weeks ago. And, at least Nancy knew for certain that Barb was dead. That she was beyond saving.

While every day the certainty that Eleven was still out there, in the Upside Down, or maybe held in another lab, waiting for them (for *him*), to go and save her, grew in him.

And nobody was listening to him.

The first few days after her…… disappearance, no one was inclined to listen to a kid who had just had the shock of his life, ranting about a strange girl trapped in another dimension or held by the government (because *of course* they were still painted as the good guys, showing up and handling everything when it got all shot to hell. As far as Mike was concerned, the only good thing that came out the whole mess that had been that last night, was that the people who had done *bad things* to Eleven were no longer alive.)

He had tried to talk to Chief Hopper the next day, certain that *he,* out of all the adults who brushed off his concerns, who told him that he was lucky to be alive and to stop being such a bother to the nice government people who were trying to figure out what went wrong with the power lines, would listen to him. Will's mum was a no go, because even if she believed Mike, no one would believe her, since she was though to have been a little crazy even before Will got taken.

But Chief Hopper had *seen*. He had believed, he had known about Eleven and he was respected, at least enough that people believed him when he talked, especially after finding Will.

But.

Chief Hopper only stared at him with something perilously close to pity and guilt in his eyes when Mike (admittedly a bit ramblingly, a bit incoherently), told him that Eleven was still out there, that she was waiting for them, that they had to save her. He just stared at him, and with that same guilt and pity shining in his eyes, told him, "I'm sorry, Mike. But, but Eleven's gone."

"But she isn't dead!" Mike all but screamed at him. "She isn't dead, and you know it! She's in the Upside Down, and, and we have to go, we have to go save her, she's all alone and she's probably hurt and scared and she doesn't know what to do….." To Mike's horror, he had begun crying, and it made his throat too thick to talk as Chief Hopper put a conciliatory hand on his back, patting him a few times, lightly, before removing his hand as Mike glared at him even as big, heaving sobs racked through his body.

"I'm sorry, Mike. I really, really am. I wish I could help you, but I can't."

He had taken Mike back home after that, delivering him to his parents' concerned and disapproving glances. Because, although they were very attentive, even his father, the first week, he (and Nancy, though she pretty much just ignored it) was under house-arrest for the time being, not allowed to go anywhere but school.

It had been a month, and as the sympathy for him wound down, as he got downgraded from 'poor kid who got caught in a bad situation' to 'kid who's milking the situation for all that he's worth, seriously, he should just stop', his anger just grew.

Dustin and Lucas were supportive, but when he tried to include them, tried to tell them that Eleven was still out there, they shied away.

"Man, you know you're my best friend and all, but you saw her explode, right? She's gone, dude. I'm sorry, I know you like her, but

she's, well, she's dead." Lucas had fidgeted as he said it, though his eyes had been earnest as he looked into Mike's. Mike hadn't talked to him for a week after that.

Dustin had looked at him with understanding and sympathy, but still he said, "I miss her too, you know. I want her back too. But, but you gotta realise that you've always been a bit unreasonable about her. You have to entertain the possibility that she's just, not alive anymore."

Only Will, gentle Will who had a permanently haunted look in his eyes these days, even when he was laughing, seemed to believe him.

"It's okay, Mike. I believe you."

Mike had tried to question him about it, frantic for a reason that answer was so freely given, without having to be coerced, shouted at, but he had stopped when Joyce had found him doing it and almost thrown him out of her house, the habitual gentle look she always wore absent as she stared fiercely at him.

"I don't care what you believe, but you keep my boy away from it, do you understand? I *won't* lose him again."

Mike hadn't dared broach the subject again after that.

With no one listening to him, with no one giving him the benefit of the doubt, with the pity-filled glances he got everywhere he went, even from Nancy nowadays, the anger had been boiling under his skin. His skin felt stiff, stretched taught across his bones, bulging under the pressure of keeping it all inside.

Even though he knew he was right, even though he knew that everyone was wrong and that they were closing their eyes to the truth (because it's easier pretending it never happened than to deal with the consequences, than to think that there would ever be a reason they would need to go back), he was scared as well.

Scared for Eleven lost in the Upside Down, growing sicker and more alone every day that they were doing *nothing*. Scared of what he would do when that anger boiled over. When it escaped.

He had an idea it wouldn’t be pretty.

Eleven didn’t know how long it had been. It was hard to measure days and nights in a world where everything was perpetually dark and it was easier to crawl into a corner and sleep than face the reality that this was where she was now.

Everything stayed the same for a very long time.

Then, one day, while she was ambling along in the Byers’ house (she found the greatest comfort there, since Joyce lived there in the Right Side Up, and it helped to think of her soothing voice calming her down when she wanted to scream and run and run until she collapsed) when she happened to glance into the bathroom and for a split second, she saw Will Byers.

He was standing there, looking pale and scared, staring into the mirror.

“Will.”

He looked over at her when he heard her soft whisper, but before either of them could do anything more than stare at each other, he flickered away.

Eleven stood stock still for a moment, too surprised to move, before a feeling much like the buzzing that had accompanied the one fizzy drink Mike had once smuggled her snuck up on her. She didn’t know how he had done it, but Will had been in the Upside Down. He could come there again. He could talk to her.

He could save her.

Author's Note:

> I just had a lot of feelings. I don't know whether this will become a longer thing or not, I just had to write something.
> (Edit (23/10/2016): I read this again and realised how many typos there were *and covered my head in shame* so I'm just fixing those. Also, reading this

gave me some new ideas, so I might be writing a little continuation of this.)